

Carmarthenshire County Council

Petition Scheme

Helping to increase public participation in Local Government

Carmarthenshire County Council welcomes petitions and recognises that petitions are one of many ways in which people can let us know their concerns and engage in the democratic process.

Democratic Services, Carmarthenshire County Council, County Hall, Carmarthen.
01267 224028 / Democraticservices@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

Introduction

We welcome petitions and recognise that they are just one of many ways in which you can let us know about your concerns and participate in the democratic process. This guidance summarises our petitions scheme and applies to all petitions submitted that fall within the scheme.

Petitions are not the only way to resolve an issue or to make your views known. You could also:

- contact the relevant service or officer directly
- contact your local ward councillor
- contact the relevant Cabinet Member
- ask a scrutiny committee to look into the matter
- make a complaint to us

Guidelines and how to submit a petition

Anyone who lives or works in Carmarthenshire can organise or sign a petition, including those under the age of 18.

There are two types of petitions:

- Petitions which are signed by fewer than 50 registered electors in respect of paper copies or fewer than 300 electors in respect of e-petitions will automatically be referred to the department responsible for the service area, who will respond directly to the petitioner.
- Petitions submitted to the Council meeting (under Council Procedure Rule 10B) must include 50 registered elector signatures for paper copies and 300 registered elector signatures for e-petitions.
- Each petition must state the name, address and postcode of the petition organiser. In these circumstances:
 - a) The petition organiser must be either a local government elector of the county or a Carmarthenshire County Councillor. If the petition is not accompanied by contact details, including an address for the petition organiser we will contact the first signatory on the petition to agree who should act as the petition organiser. The contact details of the petition organiser will not be placed on the council's website.
 - b) Paper Petitions for a Council meeting must be delivered in writing to the Chief Executive no later than 10.00 a.m. 7 clear working days (NB clear days does not include the day the

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petition is received or the day of the meeting) before the day of the meeting it is proposed to be presented at.

- c) For e-petitions once 300 registered elector signatures have been received, this petition will automatically be included on the agenda of the next available Council meeting if a debate at Council was requested when the petition was created.

If you submit a petition, it must include: -

- a) a petition title/subject
- b) a short, clear statement outlining what the petition is about and the action you are asking the Council to take
- c) the name, address (including post code) email and telephone number of the petition organiser
- d) the names and addresses (including post code) of those who have signed the petition
- e) and relate to a function that is within the Council's powers or duties, or affects the area of the Authority or part of it, or the inhabitants of that area or some of them.

Paper petitions can be submitted to the Chief Executive via the Head of Democratic Services, Chief Executive's Department, Carmarthenshire County Council, County Hall, Carmarthen. SA31 1JP.

E-petitions can be submitted through the Council's e-petitions website and must clearly include the starting and closing date of the petition, and whether there is a paper petition collecting signatures in conjunction with the e-petition. Further information on completing an e-petition can be found on our [e-petition page](#). Petitions will not be accepted from other on-line petition systems. E-Petitions will be live on the Authority's website for two months.

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Exceptions to the Petitions Scheme

The majority of petitions we receive will be accepted but there are some circumstances where we will not be able to deal with your petition under this scheme.

- Petitions that fall outside of this scheme include:
 - Any matter that the Council is not directly responsible for or has no influence over. We will return the petition to you and where possible direct you to the correct organisation.
 - Any matter relating to a planning decision – These will be dealt with using existing planning procedures. For further information about making representations about planning decisions, please contact the planning team at planningconsultations@cararthenshire.gov.uk
 - Any matter relating to a licensing application – These will be dealt with using existing procedures. For further information about making representations, please contact the licensing team at schlicensing@cararthenshire.gov.uk
 - A statutory petition (for example a petition for a directly elected mayor).
 - Any matter where there is already an existing right of appeal or a separate complaints process. These will be dealt with using existing procedures.
 - Any specific issues that the Council is carrying out a formal consultation on. These will be dealt with under a different process.
 - A petition where we have received another petition on the same issue within the previous 12 months. In these circumstances, we will write to the petition organiser and include a copy of the response to the first petition received.
 - Petitions which are considered to be vexatious, abusive, repetitive or otherwise inappropriate will not be accepted.
 - Any petition that is asking the Council to do anything unlawful.
 - Any petition relating to the subject of any legal action taken by the Council or an individual.
 - A petition which contains confidential information for example about a specific individual.
 - In the period immediately before an election or referendum we may need to deal with your petition differently – if this is the case we will explain the reasons and discuss the revised timescale which will apply.

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What you cannot put in a petition

Petitions must not contain

- Language which is offensive, intemperate or provocative. This not only includes obvious profanities, swear words and insults, but any language which a reasonable person would regard as offensive
- Potentially false or potentially defamatory statements
- Information which is prohibited from being published by an order of a court or a body or person with similar power
- Material which is potentially confidential, commercially sensitive, or which may cause personal distress or loss
- Any commercial endorsement, promotion of any product, service or publication or statements that amount to advertisements;
- The names of officials of public bodies, unless they are part of the senior management of those organisations;
- The names of family members of elected representatives or officials of public bodies;
- The names of individuals, or information where they may be identified, in relation to criminal charges;
- Issues for which a petition is not the appropriate channel (for example, correspondence about a personal issue).

What happens once we receive the petition:-

- An acknowledgement will be sent to the petition organiser within five working days of receiving the petition. It will let them know what we plan to do with the petition and when they can expect to hear from us again.
- The petition will be published on the Council's petitions register on our website.
- If the Council considers it can meet what the petition asks for, the acknowledgement may confirm what action has been taken on the request and the petition will be closed. If some other action is proposed or intended, the acknowledgement will explain this.
- If the petition has enough signatures to trigger a Council debate then the acknowledgment will confirm this and tell you when and where the meeting will take place.

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- If the petition has fewer than 50 registered electors of the County in respect of a paper copy or fewer than 300 registered electors of the County on an e-petition then the petition will be referred to the service department to respond.
- If a petition does not follow the guidelines as set out, the Council may decide not to do anything further with it. In that case, you will receive a written explanation of the reasons.
- The Council reserves the right to verify signatories as required. Petitioners should ensure that a valid address and postcode is included for all petitioners that relates to a home address (if living in Carmarthenshire) or work address (if working or running a business in Carmarthenshire). These details will be taken into account when identifying if there are enough signatories to refer the petition for a debate at Council.

Petitions debated at Council meetings

In the case of a petition on a Council function the petitioner will be invited to present the petition formally to the Council save that in the case of a petition on a Council function delegated to a Council Committee (e.g. a planning or licensing matter) where the petitioner will be given a choice to elect to formally present their petition to that relevant Committee. Where the petitioner elects to present the petition to the relevant Committee, Council shall nevertheless debate the matter at its meeting and refer the petition and its deliberations upon it to the next meeting of that relevant Committee to inform its decision in the matter

In the case of a petition on an executive function the petitioner will be given a choice to elect to formally present their petition to the County Council, the Cabinet or where relevant, the relevant Cabinet Member save that the eventual Cabinet decision shall be a matter for the Cabinet or Cabinet Member. Where the petitioner elects to formally present the petition to the Cabinet or Cabinet Member, Council shall nevertheless debate the matter at its meeting and refer the petition and its deliberations upon it to the next meeting of the Cabinet or Cabinet Member to inform its decision on the matter.

In the case of a petition being referred to a Cabinet Member, he/she will meet the petitioners, accept the petition and make a brief response. He/she will then refer the petition to the relevant officers to prepare a report on the matter for consideration at one of his/her decisions meetings

Petitions placed before Council will be discussed at a meeting which all Councillors can attend.

Petitions will be placed on the agenda in the order in which they were received.

The petition organiser will be given five minutes to present the petition at the meeting. The petitioner shall be confined to reading out or summarising the prayer of the petition, indicating

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the number and description of the signatories, and making such further supporting remarks to the petition as the person presenting it shall think fit

At a meeting of Council or a relevant committee the Leader or the relevant Cabinet Member or Committee Chair shall be entitled to make a brief response to the presentation. There will be no debate on the petition at full Council.

How long we retain personal information in a petition

The names and contact information of signatories on a petition will be retained by the Authority for 3 months in accordance with our retention period. After that time the information will be destroyed.

What can I do if I feel my petition has not been dealt with properly?

If you feel that we have not dealt with your petition properly, please contact the Monitoring Officer who will review your complaint and will advise you of the action which is intended. Please provide a short explanation of the reasons in your communication with us.

Monitoring Officer
Carmarthenshire County Council
County Hall
Carmarthen
SA31 1JP.

LRJones@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

Tel 01267 224010

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Template for Petitions

Guidance notes:

Please find a suggested template for your petition, please ensure each page has the petition subject at the top of the page.

The petition organiser must live, work or own a business in Carmarthenshire.

If you wish to sign this petition, please put down your Carmarthenshire address if you live, work or own a business in the County as this will count towards any threshold for debate at Council meetings (where all Councillors attend).

Signatories from outside the County of Carmarthenshire will not be taken into account for presenting a petition to a Council meeting for formal debate.

Contact Details of the Petitioner (the person who has organised the petition and will present it at a Council meeting)

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Full Name: | |
| Address for Correspondence: | 1st Line: _____ 2nd Line: _____ 3rd Line: _____ Post code: _____ |
| Telephone No: | |
| Email address: | |
| Signature | |

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PETITION TO CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

| |
|---|
| Petition subject: |
| We the undersigned petition Carmarthenshire County Council to: |
| Summary of action already taken (if applicable) |

| | Full Name | Home or Work/Business Address (including postcode) | Signature | Email address (if possible) |
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*Continue as necessary.

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